

# Muslim presence in america

Religion



The paper "Muslim Presence in America" is a brilliant example of an essay on religion and theology. Many people in the Western world Muslim presence in America in the twenty and twenty-first centuries. But researches have shown that Muslims were present in America since the fifteenth century and even earlier. Their arrival in large numbers was brought about through the transatlantic slave trade, and there are also records of Muslim contributions to the making of America. The case of Ayyub bin Sulaiman is also mentioned. The transatlantic slave trade began in the mid-fifteenth century and involved the captivation and forced migration of over 12 million African men, women, and children destined for slavery in the Americas. Although it began with the Portuguese and served mainly Brazil and parts of the Spanish empire, later the British, French and other Europeans also shipped many slaves to places in North America such as Virginia from 1607. The exact origins of these slaves were from the central and western regions of Africa. Nearly 85% were from West Central, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra and the Gold Coast combined (Lovejoy, 2000). In terms of religion, most Muslim Africans were found in northern African such as Sudan, but they were found to be too educated and rebellious for the Europeans to handle. However, there are suggestions that at least 30% of the slaves in the Atlantic slave trade were Muslims coming mainly from areas of West Africa. One famous slave Ayyub bin Sulaiman Diallo (anglicized to Job ben Solomon Jallon) was known to have been set free in Maryland by the founder of Georgia, James Oglethorpe, and sent to England in 1735, five years after his kidnapping from West Africa. (Bluett, 1734) Muslim slaves are also known to have organized slave uprisings such as in Bahia, Brazil in 1835 organized by Muslim Yoruba and Hausa slaves (Stearns, 1992). A much earlier revolt took place “ on the <https://assignbuster.com/muslim-presence-in-america/>

island of Hispaniola in 1522 when enslaved African Muslims rebelled and killed nine Spanish before being recaptured (NHC, 2006). We know from the Virginia General Assembly Act 16701 that ‘Turks and Moors’ were excluded from being declared slaves (because of friendly relations with their countries). (Michie, 1903: 64) This again shows that Muslims were present in North America as a result of the slave trade. During Christopher Columbus’ first voyage in 1492, there were two Muslim captains who helped organize his expedition. There were also other Muslims on board to help him with “translation and other services” (Amir, 2001: 3). In fact, Columbus reported that near Gibara on the Cuban coast, he saw a mosque atop a mountain, thus indicating that Muslims were not only present but already settled in the Americas. However, Columbus was not the first to sail the Atlantic by any means. Sultan Abu Bakar II, the king of Mali was one of the earliest Muslim sailors to cross the Atlantic in 1312 (Ali, 2001: 3). He is known to have explored northern America with the Mandingans via the Mississippi and other rivers, even bringing elephants along with him from Africa. Even earlier, the Chinese Sung document records voyages of Muslim sailors to Mu-Lan-Pi in the 12th century, which is present-day America. A number of such Atlantic voyages are also noted by the Arab geographer Al-Idrisi (Salma, 1992: 276). Further still, in his book ‘Saga America’, Dr. Barry Fell (1980) reports an early rock carving with an Arabic inscription, and even discovered evidence for Muslim schools to have existed in places like Colorado, Indiana and New Mexico during the 8th century recognizable from markings. The short outline above shows that Muslims were also amongst those transported from Africa to the Americas during the transatlantic slave trade beginning in the fifteenth century. However, there is also evidence of an even earlier Muslim

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presence in America. Muslim sailors preceded Columbus' 'discovery' of America by at least 300 years. There is still earlier evidence of presence dating back to the 8th century. It is also of no surprise then that Muslim contributed to the making of America.